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## **Press Release**

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Contact: Brian Jordan  
(410) 514-7668 (office)

# **Maryland's U-1105 Black Panther Historic Shipwreck Preserve Becomes a Charter Member of the National System of Marine Protected Areas**

CROWNSVILLE – The U-1105 Black Panther Historic Shipwreck Preserve, located in the Potomac River in St. Mary's County, has been included in the charter list of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Under Secretary of Commerce Dr. Jane Lubchenco made the announcement today at the Governor Calvert House in Annapolis. Joining Dr. Lubchenco at the Welcoming the First Members of the National System of Marine Protected Areas Event were Dr. Susan Langley, Maryland State Underwater Archeologist; Mr. Will Shafroth, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Department of the Interior; Dr. Mark Hixon, Chair of the MPA Federal Advisory Committee; and, Mr. Jim Toomey, Creator and Author of "Sherman's Lagoon"©.

The U-1105 was the first underwater historic shipwreck preserve designated in the state of Maryland, and is now one of only 225 charter sites from state, territorial, federal and federal/state partnership agencies in 28 states in the National System of Marine Protected Areas. The preserve was created in 1995 through a partnership with the U.S. Navy (who owns the wreck), the Maryland Historical Trust, and Saint Mary's County to promote the preservation of the historic U-1105 "Black Panther" submarine, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

MPAs are defined areas where natural or cultural resources are given greater protection than in the surrounding waters. In the U.S., these areas may span a range of habitats including the open ocean, coastal areas, inter-tidal zones, estuaries, and the Great Lakes. In an effort to conserve critical natural and cultural marine resources, the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Commerce are partnering with federal, state and territorial agencies to form a National System of Marine Protected Areas. "The Maryland Historical Trust welcomes the opportunity to work with diverse State, Federal, and local partners to protect, conserve, and manage Maryland's unique submerged cultural heritage", said Dr. Langley.

Rodney Little, State Historic Preservation Officer, was pleased with the recognition of the U-1105 shipwreck preserve, "the establishment of cultural resource MPAs allows the Trust to protect significant historical and archeological resources, while allowing appropriate public access to ensure that these unique sites will be available for future generations. Maryland continues to be in the fore-front of cultural resource management for sites located on land and under water."

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was Maryland's lead agency for nominating Maryland sites to NOAA for inclusion in the national system. "DNR was pleased to work with the Trust and the U.S. Navy to help coordinate the State's participation in the national system of MPAs, which lead to the nomination the U-1105 Black Panther Historic Shipwreck Preserve on the Potomac River as a site key for conservation," said DNR Secretary John Griffin. "Through our coastal spatial planning and mapping initiatives, we will continue investigating opportunities for nominating additional Maryland sites to the system that address sustainable production or natural heritage areas."

This first group of MPAs accepted into the national system will be the focus of cooperative efforts to address common resource management challenges and will be placed on the official List of National System MPAs, which is available to the public via the Federal Register and on [www.MPA.gov](http://www.MPA.gov).

## About the U-1105

On 20 April 1944, U-1105, a modified Type VI-C German submarine, built at the Nordseewerke Shipyard at Emden, Germany, was launched to begin its brief and dramatic wartime career. U-1105 was one of fewer than ten submarines produced during the war outfitted with an experimental synthetic rubber skin designed to counter Allied sonar devices; the black rubber coating had earned it the nickname "Black Panther." On its first mission in April of 1945 off Black Rock, Ireland, U-1105 disabled HMS Redmill, a 1300 ton TE Captain Class frigate, with two acoustic torpedoes killing 32 men. The Allied squadron searched for the elusive U-boat, but without success. The Black Panther's short career ended with Germany's surrender, and the vessel was eventually turned over to the United States Navy for study and experimentation in the U.S.

U-1105, now officially a war prize of the U.S. Navy, arrived at Portsmouth, New Hampshire in early 1946. In February, research on the unique rubber-tiled skin was initiated at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington and at the MIT Acoustic Laboratory in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The ship was then ordered to be retained in a state of readiness for explosives testing. In the fall of 1949, U-1105 was towed into the Potomac River to an anchorage off Piney Point, Maryland. The ship was sunk using a new type of depth charge, and went down in 20 seconds in over 91 feet of water, with 65 feet of water over the conning tower. Although upright on the bottom, the pressure hull was cracked open by the explosion all the way around to the keel; but otherwise intact.

In 1992-93, the U-1105 wreck site became the subject of an archeological survey expedition. Supported by financial assistance from the Department of Defense Legacy Resource management Program, and a cooperative agreement between the Navy and the State of Maryland, the wreck was designated as Maryland's first historic shipwreck preserve in 1995.

## About the Maryland Historical Trust

The Maryland Historical Trust, an agency of the Maryland Department of Planning, is the State Historic Preservation Office and is dedicated to preserving the legacy of Maryland's past. Through research, conservation, and education, the Trust assists the people of Maryland in understanding their historical and cultural heritage.

For more information, please contact Brian Jordan, Assistant State Underwater Archeologist, Maryland Historical Trust: (410) 514-7668 (office); [bjordan@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:bjordan@mdp.state.md.us)

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